



FACT SHEET



VERIFICATION AND COMPLIANCE WITH THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION

The United States is one of 170 States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), which prohibits the development, production, stockpiling, and use of chemical weapons (CW). The CWC also requires destruction of existing stocks and production facilities. The CWC does not prohibit production, processing, consumption, or trade of related chemicals for peaceful purposes, but it does establish a verification regime to help ensure such activities are consistent with the object and purpose of the treaty. The CWC also requires detailed declarations of CW stockpiles, production facilities, and related facilities (e.g., laboratories and test evaluation sites). Its entry into force on 29 April 1997 was a major step forward in the international community's drive to eliminate the threat from these weapons of mass destruction.

Verification of compliance under the CWC is a national and a collective responsibility. Article IX provides a basis for every State Party to participate actively in resolving concerns which may cause doubt about other states' compliance with the Convention. The United States has successfully used bilateral consultations under Article IX to clarify and resolve concerns about the compliance of various States Party. The U.S. supports the use of Article IX procedures by States Party to address compliance questions and encourages States Party to share the results of their consultations, if possible. Article IX also gives States Party to the CWC the right to request Executive Council assistance in clarifying ambiguities or resolving concerns about possible noncompliance of another State

Party and/or to request a challenge inspection to resolve compliance concerns.

The Role of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) was established pursuant to the CWC in order, among other things, to "ensure the implementation of its provisions, including those for international verification of compliance with it." The Conference of States Party is authorized to "review compliance" with the CWC, and is to "[t]ake the necessary measures to ensure compliance with this Convention and to redress and remedy any situation which contravenes the provisions of this Convention"

The Dangers of Noncompliance

Preventing the use of chemical weapons should be a major policy consideration for all nations. Less than 20 years ago, they were used in the Iran-Iraq war (and less than 10 years ago in Tokyo by a non-state actor). Recent allegations of use, while unsubstantiated, highlight that use is a continuing concern. States Party need to be involved and engaged in assuring effective verification and strict compliance with the Convention.

Assuring effective verification and strict compliance with the Convention is the responsibility of States Party to the Convention,

acting individually and through the organs of the OPCW. The OPCW's Technical Secretariat (TS) provides valuable assistance by providing States Party with information from its inspections and other activities. Each and every Party has not only the right, but the responsibility to evaluate the compliance of its treaty partners and to promote full compliance by all.

Detecting noncompliance is not enough. What really counts is to ensure that there are consequences for noncompliance, and that prompt action is taken to restore compliance. The drafters of the CWC envisioned this and provided measures in Article XII to redress and remedy any situation which contravenes provisions of the Convention. Consequences can

be in the form of restriction or suspension of the State Party's rights and privileges under the Convention, the adoption of collective measures by the other States Party, or in cases of particular

gravity, referral of the issue to the attention of the United Nations General Assembly and the United Nations Security Council.

If arms control, nonproliferation and disarmament agreements and commitments are to support the security of all nations, then all nations must actively work to promote compliance by all member states. This requires the concerted effort of all member states and with regard to the CWC, of the Technical Secretariat. Detecting a violation is not an end in itself; it is a call to action. Without strict compliance and without the concerted action of all States Party to insist upon strict compliance – and to hold violators accountable for their actions – the national security of all nations will erode and global stability will be undermined.

For further information please visit:

<http://www.state.gov/t/>

00 1 (202) 647-5315